Religious teaching, the copyists of the Qur’an

Training began with learning how to read, write and recite the Qur’an, as well as studying the Hadiths or words of the Prophet. As books were rare, knowledge was traditionally committed to memory and communicated by word of mouth. For this reason, the ability to write was considered important and valuable as it allowed knowledge and religion to be passed to subsequent generations.

Name: Inkwell
Dynasty: Hegira 4th century/ AD 10th century Umayyads of al-Andalus, Caliphate period
Details: National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain
Justification: Manuscript copyists were held in the highest esteem, and copying the Qur’an was seen as a meritorious act that enabled devout Muslims to possess their own copies. The pen and the inkwell became emblematic symbols of this honourable activity.

Name: Writing desk
Dynasty: Hegira 8th century / AD 14th century Nasrid
Details: National Archaeological Museum
Madrid, Spain
Justification: Manuscript copyists were held in the highest esteem, and copying the Qur’an was seen as a meritorious act that enabled devout Muslims to possess their own copies. The pen and the inkwell became emblematic symbols of this honourable activity.

Name: Manuscript, collection of Hadith
Dynasty: Hegira 1284 / AD 1868 Alawid
Details: Royal Library
Rabat, Morocco
Justification: Manuscript copyists were held in the highest esteem, and copying the Qur’an was seen as a meritorious act that enabled devout Muslims to possess their own copies. The pen and the inkwell became emblematic symbols of this honourable activity.